

## ***Euphorbia pallens* Dillw., the correct name for *Euphorbia articulata* Dennst., the sea-shore species from India**

**Vatsavaya S. Raju**

Plant Systematics Laboratory, Department of Botany, Kakatiya University  
Warangal - 506 009, Andhra Pradesh, India  
e-mail : vatsavaya@usa.net

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### **Abstract**

The name *Euphorbia articulata* Dennst., as applied to the species occurring in the Malabar coast of Peninsular India, but distinct from *E. atoto* Forst. f. is a later homonym and illegitimate. When *E. halophila* Miquel is treated as conspecific to *E. articulata* Dennst., the correct name of the species is *E. pallens* Dillw.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Boissier (1862), in his monographic treatment of *Euphorbia* L., considered *E. atoto* Forst. f. (1786) and *E. halophila* Miquel (1852) as two distinct and geographically distant species under the subsect. *Sclerophylleae*. Apparently, the latter is different from the former in having the smaller stature, many smaller bracts, and globose seeds. But, Hooker (1887) regarded *E. halophila* to be conspecific with *E. atoto*, which was accepted and followed by the subsequent workers of the flora of southern India (Rama Rao, 1914; Cooke, 1906; Gamble, 1925; Sharma *et al.*, 1984; Nicolson *et al.*, 1988).

Recently, Binojkumar and Balakrishnan (1993) segregated the Indian coastal element on account of its stems not tapered towards the apex, leaves obtuse, stipules broad and fimbriate, and cyathia in fascicles in contrast to *E. atoto* Forst. f. as *E. articulata* Dennst. (1818) instead of treating as *E. halophila* on the basis of rule of priority of ICBN. They concurred with Boissier and Hooker in considering *E. halophila* Miquel to be conspecific with *E. articulata* Dennst. But, they are obviously unaware of the fact that *E. articulata* Dennst. (1818) is a later homonym (Aublet, Hist. Pl. Guiana Fr. 480. 1775). Indeed, Boissier (1862) cited three different *Euphorbia articulata*: (i) *E. articulata* Lam. (1788), (ii) *E. articulata* Andersson (1854) and (iii) Dennstedt's name which was mentioned in synonymy under *E. halophila*. Dillwyn's *nomen novum* was perhaps deliberate since Dennstedt's *E. articulata* is a later homonym. It is to be noted here that Mabberley (1977), while reviewing the validly published names provided by Dillwyn and Dennstedt, treated *E. pallens* Dillw. (Mabberley, 1.c.531) and *E. articulata* Dennst. (Mabberley, 1.c. 539) as *E. atoto* Forst. f. Since both these

### Vatsavaya S. Raju

names are homotypic (based on Rheede's Hort. Malab. 10: t. 58. 1690) and considered to be different from *E. atoto* Forst. f. (Prodr. 36. no. 207. 1786), the next available name for this taxon is *E. halophila* Miquel (1852) as accepted by Boissier. However, Dillwyn's work (1839) though inscribed as 'Not published' in the title page (i.e., not passed through a publisher), was accessible to many a botanist working on the flora of India (e.g., Elliot, Fl. Andhrice: 84. 1859; Boissier, l.c.; Hooker, l.c.). Now, after Mabberley's (1977) report of Dillwyn's (1839) names as effectively and validly published, the correct name of the present species is *Euphorbia pallens* Dillw.

***Euphorbia pallens* Dillw., Review Hort. Malab. 55. 1839.**

Type: Rheede, Hort. Malab. 10: t. 58. 1690.

*E. articulata* Dennst., Schluessel. Hort. Malab. 37. 1818, non Aublet (1775), nec Lam. (1788), nec Andersson (1854); Binoj. & Balakr., Rheede 3: 113, 1993.

Type: Rheede, Hort. Malab. 10: t. 58. 1690 (Iconotype).

*E. halophila* Miquel, Anal. Bot. Ind. 3: 16. 1852; Boiss. in DC., Prodr. 15(2): 13. 1862.

Type: Malabar, Mahe et Telischerry, J.F. Metz in Herb. *Hohenacker 725* (K.- holotype, n.v.).

*E. atoto* sensu auctt., non G. Forster: Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 248. 1887 p.p.; Cooke, Fl. Pres. Bombay 2: 572. 1906; Gamble, Fl. Pres. Madras 2: 1275. 1925; Sharma *et al.*, Fl. Karnataka 249. 1984; Nicolson *et al.*, Intep. Hort. Malab. 109. 1988.

*Note:* Binojkumar and Balakrishnan (1993) specified the distribution of the species as also in Orissa (*East coast of India*) without citing a specimen or reference. Besides, they mentioned the type of *E. halophila* Miquel to be "*Hohenacker 725*." It is misleading since Boissier (l.c.13) cited the specimen as that of Metz. J.F. Metz (1819-1886) of Basel Mission (Switzerland) collected plant specimens from South Kanara (Mangalore), Coorg (Mercara) and Nilgiris (Ooty) (Hooker & Thomson, 1855: 127) for R.F. Hohenacker (1789-1874), supposedly as vouchers for van Rheede's *Hortus Malabaricus* though he actually collected them in the above-mentioned localities. Furthermore, Burkill (1965: 53) stated that some authors quote these specimens as Hohenacker's for he was only an intermediary. However, it is to be ascertained whether the 725 was a number assigned by Metz or inserted by Hohenacker.

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***Euphorbia pallens* Dillw., the correct name for *Euphorbia articulata***

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